

Remarks

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 14-34, 36 and 37 are pending in this application. Claims 14, 15, 30 and 33 are the independent claims. Claims 1, 2 and 4-13 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 15, 18, 21, 23-25, 28, 29 and 31-34 have been amended.

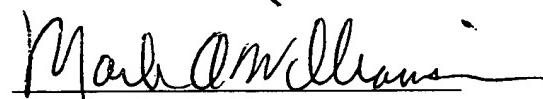
Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 and Claims 4-13 were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Without conceding the propriety of the §102 rejection, Applicants have cancelled Claims 1, 2, and 4-13 herein without prejudice in order to expedite allowance.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that Claims 14-27, 30-34, 36, and 37 have been allowed and that Claims 28 and 29 recite allowable subject matter. Claims 28 and 29 have been amended herein to depend solely from allowed claims. In addition, minor changes have been made to Claims 15, 25, 29, and 31-34 in order to correct minor typographical errors and/or incorporate the changes made by the Examiner in the Examiner's Amendment that accompanied the Notice of Allowability dated June 17, 2003. Further, the multiple dependencies of Claims 18, 21, 28, and 29 have been revised in a more accepted format as so as not to reference cancelled Claim 35. Lastly, Claims 23 and 24 have been amended to be more consistent with Claim 21, on which they depend. These changes are not believed to affect the allowability of the claims and have not been made for any reasons related to patentability.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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